

C A M B O D I A

28 November 1967

SIHANOUK FORESEES BOMBING, OCCUPATION BY U.S.

Phnom Penh Domestic Service in Cambodian 0002 GMT 27 Nov 67 D

[Press conference by Prince Sihanouk on 26 November in Damnak Chanakatha hall, Phnom Penh--40 minutes; recorded]

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[Editorial Report] Prince Sihanouk begins by saying that he is holding this press conference due to a very important situation caused by the U.S. press, which he says is urging the U.S. Government and army to attack Cambodia on the pretext that Cambodia has allowed the Vietnamese communists to build camps on its territory in order to attack U.S.-South Vietnamese troops. Branding this an "abject lie," he denounces before the world the alleged U.S. intention to bomb Cambodia and reads cables from Cambodian UN representative Huot Sambath reporting on the virulence of the U.S. press attacks on Cambodian neutrality.

Sihanouk asserts that "this is an appeal of the press to the Washington government, the U.S. Army, and the U.S. bellicose hawks and gun dealers to kill Cambodia. They have claimed that unless the U.S. bombings and escalation are expanded to Cambodia, as has been done to Tonkin, one could never cut off the wings of the Viet Cong and Viet Minh forces which are fighting the Americans. They have accused us of giving shelter to the Viet Cong and Viet Minh (? in the frontier areas) and allowing entire convoys of armaments and supplies to cross Cambodia, thereby holding us responsible for the loss of thousands of U.S. lives (? and those of) the Vietnamese fighting beside the Americans against the Vietnamese communists. I must tell you, gentlemen, that this campaign has been launched because the U.S. hawks and press are hopeless about any change in our policy."

After reading an article by (? Joseph Alsop) on this subject, Prince Sihanouk deplors what he calls the American belief that "I am an incomparable opportunist who always sides with the stronger party." He adds: "The Americans ignore their own faults; they pretend that a few years ago I sided with China because I thought they were the losers and that now, seeing that they have become stronger than ever, I have invited Mrs. Kennedy and the U.S. press." After referring to Cambodia's warm welcome of Mrs. Kennedy and the U.S. journalists who were allowed to inspect all Cambodian provinces, Prince Sihanouk points out that because Cambodia refused a rapprochement with the Americans even after its dispute with China, the U.S. press has urged the U.S. administration and army to reduce Cambodia to ashes.

Concerning what he describes as "the so-called Sihanouk trail," he says: "The ICC and many investigators had searched everywhere in my country but did not find the Sihanouk trail." Calling to witness journalists (Hamel) and Bertil Galand who, he says, did not find any bridge and road, Prince Sihanouk asserts: "We have not even kept up this particular trail [the one found by American newsmen] because we want to make it unnegotiable for vehicles and to prevent people from saying that 'the Sihanouk trail has been used by convoys of [words indistinct] to supply the Viet Cong.'"

Denying the allegation that there were Viet Cong and Viet Minh forces of division size in Cambodia, he stresses that Cambodia can hardly maintain a few hundred troops in the area where there are only Cambodians working to make a living.

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Concerning the U.S. accusation that Cambodia aids the Viet Cong, he says: "We have made a verbal agreement with the Viet Cong concerning trade. The Viet Cong buy our rice, medicines, and other goods and pay with dollars. There is no reason for us to refrain from trading with them, since we have commercial dealings even with the Saigon government, North Vietnam, and everybody."

After revealing that the Viet Cong have refused medical treatment by Cambodia, he asserts the Cambodian right to help the Viet Cong and Viet Minh--"a brotherly people"--to become "independent."

After asking the journalists to convey to the U.S. Government that "I am sincerely grateful to it for not yet having given the green light to the hawks to murder Cambodia," Prince Sihanouk says: "Despite his press' appeal to murder, Johnson has not yet decided to kill us. He may some day. However, it is necessary to pay him homage although his press is of extraordinary savagery."

He goes on: "If they extend escalation to Cambodia, I can say that Cambodia will not (?kneel down) but will immediately change its policy. We will mobilize our entire people and send guerrillas to participate in the war. If the Americans invade our country and occupy Phnom Penh, we will accept it and join the Viet Cong and Viet Minh to struggle against the Americans."

He tells the journalists: "If the Americans ever extend their escalation to Cambodia and occupy only part of this country, Cambodia will prefer entire occupation and will wage war against the Americans. We will go into the bush and conduct a people's war in the Viet Cong fashion against the Americans because we cannot suffer the Americans bringing escalation to Cambodia. Despite the current appeal of their press to murder, Mr. Johnson and Washington have not yet made a decision because they know where matters stand. You may be sure that Sihanouk and the Sangkum will do it. You may be sure that if the Americans ever deal that blow to us--the innocent--we will not remain idle with our arms folded and will not let our innocent youths at the frontier die. It will be of no use for Phnom Penh to indulge in peace. We will go into the bush (?and struggle) to death against the Americans."

After stressing that this important matter should be brought to the attention of the entire world, he informs the audience that he will order his government and people to take all precautions against eventual escalation, stating: "We will surely conduct a general guerrilla war against the Americans. This is a decision which I take in full consciousness of the situation. Therefore, the Americans have to choose between leaving us alone or run this risk."

Concerning frontier control, Prince Sihanouk says that he will not object if the United States gives the ICC helicopters, to be piloted by Canadians or Indians. He "proposes to the Americans to give the ICC sufficient money to build fixed posts in key areas suspected of giving passage to the Viet Cong."

Concerning the journalists' allegation that there might be from 10 to 20 camps, he says: "Actually, they found only a few slips of paper, some cigarette packages, a first-aid bandage, and some U.S. dollars. However, they concluded that there was a Viet Cong camp." We will perhaps be bombed because the U.S. press wants it."

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After pointing out that all the Khmer people are indignant at the news that Cambodia may be bombed, due to this trifling story, he warns the U.S. press that "if it continues its campaign and if it never obtains (satisfaction), then it will have to repent because all the Cambodian people will wage war against America and I believe that if Cambodia joins the war, all of Indochina will be ablaze, including the Laotians" [words indistinct] and that war will also extend to Thailand.

After again praising President Johnson's cool attitude despite pressures from the U.S. press, Prince Sihanouk brushes off its erroneous view that Cambodia will change policy and says that Cambodia applies only a policy of reciprocity as demonstrated by its recent dispute and reconciliation with People's China.

Dealing with the U.S. press's charge that he invited Mrs Kennedy to visit Cambodia, whereas it was she who wrote a letter telling him of her intention to visit his country, Prince Sihanouk states: "This was a policy of reciprocity. If the Americans send me a telegram saying that they will recognize the present frontiers of Cambodia and abstain from bombing and invading us, then tomorrow, Monday morning, I will send an ambassador to Washington. Despite my friendship with China and my political and diplomatic solidarity with the NLFV, I will do so because it is a strict policy of reciprocity."

After asserting that, far from being an opportunist, his nationalist people only care for Cambodian interests, Prince Sihanouk stresses that if they side with the Americans they will displease the communists and vice versa.

He says: "I absolutely intend to stay outside this struggle for world hegemony which is being conducted by the United States and China." "I am not so stupid as to side with either party because this would be the surest way to lose not only our national independence but also our peace. But if doing so does not bring about tranquillity and if they bring war into our country, what is left to us will only be to wage war. This is a self-evident truth."

After announcing that he will order the government and National Defense Ministry to inform the people of the eventual bombing of Cambodia by the United States "if some day Mr Johnson yields to the pressure of his press" and of the need to dig individual shelters to reduce casualties, Prince Sihanouk concludes by saying: "It is necessary to foresee the occupation of part and even of several portions of our country" and also "to reorganize our guerrillas because if they ever occupy part of our territory, we will have to send guerrillas to fight the occupiers."

PHNOM PENH GRATEFUL FOR MANILA'S RECOGNITION

Phnom Penh Domestic Service in Cambodian 1200 GMT 21 Nov 67 D

[Daily topic: "A significant decision"]

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[Text] The Philippine Government has decided to recognize the present frontiers of Cambodia without asking anything in return. This decision gives us the Khmer people, great satisfaction and makes us deeply grateful. It lends a special meaning to the visit of His Excellency Narciso Ramos the Philippine foreign minister, who has just been the guest of our country.